



FIVE
SERMONS
FOR THE
TIMES

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F I V E

SERMONS FOR THE TIMES:

AGAINST PUSEYISM,

ON THE ONE HAND,

AND DISSENT,

ON THE OTHER.

I. THE PAPACY.

III. THE CHURCH.

II. BAPTISM.

IV. THE MINISTRY.

V. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

John E. Sabin

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SERMON I.

THE PAPACY.

HEBREWS IV. 14—“*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*”

MEN and brethren, may God give us an ear to hear his message to-day!* To-day is the anniversary of our national deliverance from a most fearful wickedness, and our church has appointed a service of thanksgiving for it. Well does it become any nation to be thankful for deliverance from the darkness, and idolatry, and soul-slavery, of popery—and well does it become a nation, so delivered, to be thankful for the farther deliverance from the bloody machinations of the enemies of God and his Christ. To-day, I trust, our watchmen, our minister-watchmen, will take up the note from our Prayer-book, and many a spirit-awakening blast will be sent forth from the trumpet of protestantism, and the dormant energies of many a sleeping protestant be called into life, and many a son of our protestant church be roused to put on the whole armour of God to **WITHSTAND** in the evil day which is coming, until the sea and the shore, the mountain and the valley, the rock and the plain, the Queen on her throne and the villager in his hamlet, echo back the strain, “**WITHSTAND** the enemies of God and his Christ.”—These are trying times for the church of God, and I fear that many will be sifted and fall, and that the tail of the red dragon will draw many stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And to-day the Lord is saying to the watchmen through the length and breadth of the land, “Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet and taketh not warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head—he heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him.” (Ezek. xxxiii. 1—5.)

* The Sermon was preached on the morning of the 5th of November.

In taking up the Lord's word of warning, I would shew you the circumstances of difference between the church of God and the papacy in the priesthood of the two, because I believe it is in the point of the priesthood that the great contrast lies. And I take the passage before us wherewith to shew you them, because the ONE high priest of the church of God is there set forth in all distinctiveness. And I am the more forward to do so, because I fear there is great guilt resting on the heads of multitudes of loose protestants, both ministers and people, for not keeping up, either through want of knowledge or want of stedfastness (and which is the greater sin God knoweth) the broad way-mark between "the pillar and ground of the truth" and "the mystery of iniquity."

1. *Jesus is the High Priest.*—Behold him as such in his majesty and sinlessness and unchangeableness. See him set forth as such typically in the high priest of the old covenant in Lev. xxi. 10, "And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured and that is consecrated to put on the garments, *shall not uncover his head*, (as emblematical of majesty) *nor rend his clothes*, (as emblematical of oneness) *neither shall he defile himself*, (as emblematical of sinlessness) for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him; I am the Lord." Again, in ver. 17, see his typical sinlessness, "Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that have any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God, for whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach *he hath a blemish, he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.*" Now behold all this in fulfilment in Jesus, "This man, because he *continueth ever* (because he is everlasting) hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing *he ever liveth* to make intercession for them, (as their High Priest) for such an High Priest became us, who is *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.*" (Heb. vii. 24—26.) Truly in Jesus is this typical priesthood fulfilled, for he "is not entered (as the type did only) into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures* of the true, but *into heaven itself, now to appear* (as the true High Priest) *in the presence of God* (there ever to present his sacrifice) *for us.*" (Heb. ix. 24.)

Jesus is the High Priest and the sacrifice, uniting both in one, sinless and eternal. See him typically as such in Gen. xxii. 9—"And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound

Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood." See his sinlessness by type as the sacrifice, in Lev. xxii. 20, "Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer, for it shall not be acceptable for you; and whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace-offering unto the Lord to accomplish his vow, or a freewill-offering in beeves or sheep (and so of all other offerings, as in various other passages,) *it shall be perfect to be accepted*, there shall be no blemish therein. See him as the one all-sufficient sacrifice in prophecy, "The Lord hath *laid on him the iniquity of us all*," (Isa. lxi. 6)—and as such in fulfilment from the testimony of John the Baptist, as soon as he entered on his priesthood, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29)—and as such from the testimony of Paul, "He hath made him *to be sin* (a sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," (2 Cor. v. 21.) "Christ hath given himself for us as *an offering and a sacrifice to God* for a sweetsmelling savour," (Eph. v. 2) "Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come *by his own blood he entered in* once into the holy place," (Heb. ix. 11, 12.) "Now once in the end of the world (the end of the Jewish dispensation) hath he appeared *to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*," (Heb. ix. 26.) "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **ONCE for all** but this man, after he had *offered ONE sacrifice for sins for ever*, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb. x. 10—12.) Hear my last testimony from St. Peter, to Jesus the one sinless sacrifice, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold but *with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot*." (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

Surely, surely Jesus is the High Priest, sinless and all-sufficient and unchangeable, offering up himself as the **ONE** sacrifice sinless and all-sufficient and eternal.

2. Jesus is the *Son of God*. Again behold him in type in the offering of Isaac by Abraham. What Isaac was to Abraham, Jesus is to the eternal Father—"God hath in these last days spoken unto us *by his Son*," (Heb. i. 2.)—"The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John, iii. 8.)

Truly Jesus was the Son of God.

3. Jesus is *passed into the heavens*.—"We have," says St Paul, "such a High Priest, who is *set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*," (Heb. viii. 1.) "Again Christ is entered

. *into heaven itself;*" (Heb. ix. 24,) and has "sat down on the *right hand of God*, from henceforth expecting (waiting) till his enemies be made his footstool," (Heb. x. 12, 13,) when he will "*descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the *trump of God*," (1 Thess. iv. 16,) the manifested KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Truly Jesus, the Son of God, and the High Priest of God's church, is passed into the heavens.

Now be prepared to behold the contrast in the papacy.

1. Popery is a form—I will not call it a religion, I will not prostitute the name of religion by calling popery a religion—it is *a form of human priesthood and human sacrifice*.—The priest in the papacy blesses the baptismal water, and by virtue of his blessing the water conveys regeneration. He blesses the holy water which you see at the entrance of his place of idolatry, and by virtue of his blessing it drives away the devil from the poor victim who crosses himself with it. In worship he puts on an imitation of the garment of the Levitical priesthood with the antics and mummeries of the most childish superstition. He institutes and commands penances, and mortifications of the flesh, and other self-saving acts, to the people as *propitiatory sacrifices* to God for their sins, when done in obedience to him; and where Christ says, "Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish,"* (Luke, xiii. 3,) he says, Except ye *do penance*, ye shall all likewise perish. He offers up the mass as a sacrifice for the people—not as a celebration of the death of Christ, but as a positive sacrifice offered up by the priest; and he makes the Christ, that is, he blesses and consecrates the wafer, the bread in the Lord's supper, and tells the people that he has changed it into Christ's actual body, bones, nerves and all—that he has performed a miracle, and that it is no longer a wafer but is actually Christ in bodily substance. He follows his poor victims to the last—on their death-bed he gives them extreme unction, anoints the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet with oil, which he has blessed and made holy, and so bids them die, trusting in his saving power and praying to the Virgin Mary.

In these and a thousand similar modes does the papal superstition put away Christ the ONE priest, and Christ the ONE sacrifice, and sub-

* Perhaps the frauds of the papacy were never more exemplified than in this. The word in the Greek is *μετανοήτε*,—literally, *change your mind*,—which by no possible perversion can be made to signify *do penance*.

stitute its own human priesthood, and human sacrifices, as the saviours of sinners.

2. Popery is a *form of idolatry*. The papists worship images of saints; if prayer be worship, they fall down before images of saints, and worship them. I have seen them fall down and pray before the image of the Virgin Mary, dressed out in all the fantastic mummeries of the most ignorant idolatry. God has said, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God;" (Exodus, xx. 4, 5;) but lest the people should see the sinfulness of idolatry in image-worship, they actually cut this commandment out of their decalogue, and insert the other nine in their prayer-books, omitting this, and to make out ten they divide the last into two. I am now holding in my hand one of their prayer-books in which this is so done.

They worship, that is, pray to saints and the Virgin Mary, and make them intercessors; and I would beg you to hearken as I read from this prayer-book some of their idolatrous prayers, and to believe, if it be possible, that I read truly. The book is called, The Primer; or, Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary:—"All hail, O Queen Mother of mercies; life, sweetness, and our hope, all hail; to thee, we exiled sons of Eve do cry; to thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this vale of tears; O therefore thou, our Advocate, turn unto us those thy merciful eyes, O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary." (Page 49.) Again, "I beseech thee, O holy Lady Mary, mother of God, most full of pity, the daughter of the highest King, mother most glorious, mother of orphans, the consolation of the desolate, the way of them that go astray, the safety of all that trust in thee, a virgin before child-bearing, a virgin in child-bearing, and a virgin after child-bearing, the fountain of health and grace, the fountain of consolation and pardon, the fountain of piety and gladness, the fountain of life and forgiveness that thou wouldest come with all the saints and elect of God and hasten unto my help hear and make intercession for me, most sweet Virgin Mary, mother of God and mercy." (Page 327.) Again, "O untouched and for ever blessed, singular and incomparable Virgin Mary, mother of God, by whom next unto God the whole world liveth, incline, O mother of mercy, the ears of thy pity unto my unworthy supplication, and be pitiful to me a most wretched sinner, and be unto me a merciful

helper in all things. O most blessed John, the familiar and friend of Christ, which of the same Lord Jesus Christ was chosen a virgin and among the rest more beloved, thee also I call upon with Mary, that thou wouldest vouchsafe to afford me thy aid with hers. O ye two lights divinely shining before God, chase away by your bright beams the clouds of my offences." (Page 330.) Again, "I beseech thee blessed Mary, ever Virgin, blessed Michael the archangel, blessed John Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all saints, to pray for me unto our Lord God." (Page 300.) Again, (in page 582,) "Assist, good Lord, thy people, that applying to them the worthy merits of blessed Nicomedes thy martyr, they may always be furthered by his patronage toward the obtaining of thy mercy, through our Lord." Again, (in page 591,) "O God, who seest, that by no power of our own we stand, grant mercifully, that by the intercession (not of Jesus the High Priest but) of blessed Martin thy confessor and bishop, we may be defended against all adversities through our Lord." And of such idolatrous prayers this book is full.

Thus do they put aside the ONE ONLY name given among men whereby they may be saved. And thus, if giving worship to the creature be idolatry, and if Mary and John and Nicomedes and Martin and all the saints were creatures, and if worship be due only to God, then is popery a form of idolatry.

3. Popery is a *form of blasphemy*. To assume the prerogative of God is blasphemy. Who but God only can forgive sins? And the papacy assumes power to forgive sins. If this be blasphemy, surely it is tenfold blasphemy to sell the prerogative of God, to sell forgiveness of sins for money. And the church of Rome does this. She has her scale of purchase of pardons—so much for a great sin and so much for a small sin, so much to a rich man and so much to a poor man. Nay, she has even granted indulgences beforehand to persons to commit sins, where the sins to be committed were to the furtherance of her power. To this end, she has instituted auricular confession. All her members, men and women, young and old, are to confess their sins to the priest; the secrets of the fireside and of the marriage-chamber, and the very thoughts of the heart, are all, on pain of non-forgiveness, to be unfolded to the priest. I would not even tell you the names of the church-books which they give out as guides in confession, for they are the most brutal and obscene of books, and would disgrace the savages of the South Seas. And the priest after confession gives or rather sells penances and absolves, at his pleasure.

This is the form described in 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, as "the Man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." This is the church described in Rev. xvii. 5, as "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." Therefore her proper name is ANTICHRIST. Her human priesthood and human sacrifices, her idolatry and her blasphemy, make her ANTICHRIST. And she is ANTICHRIST, not only as opposing and exalting herself above Christ, but as having all points of contrast with him. She is (in her full form) the man of sin, Christ is the man of holiness—she is the son of perdition, Christ is the son of glory—she as God sitteth in the temple of God, Christ is God in the temple of God—she is the mystery of iniquity, Christ is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. She began to work in Paul's time, "the mystery of iniquity doth already work." (2 Thess. ii. 7.) She was the antichrist that had already come in St. John's time. (1 John, ii. 18.) She has been working out her system ever since from the days of the Fathers, who are just now brought out into such estimation by the popish protestants of our days. And she shall be revealed in her time in her last full form of the lawless papal-infidel antichrist at the winding up of the Gentile dispensation, whom "the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming."

Then, brethren, what is the word from the Lord to us to-day? Even this—"Let us hold fast *our profession*." Our profession is that of the reformed church, the church of protestantism. She may have her sins—she has her sins—the relies of the very harlot-church from which she was delivered, and which in a mistaken spirit she retained, because she would conciliate, if she could, the form she came out of. But she could not conciliate—nothing can conciliate. It is the old truth in operation that there is no concord between Christ and Belial. The papacy hates her and will hunt her to the death, as the Jews hated and hunted her Lord to the death. And the infidel hates her—and the men of lords many and gods many hate her—and they will hunt her to the death, because, amidst all her sins, she is God's church, and has Christ, God's Son, for her High Priest and her sacrifice. The papist and infidel and men of various heresies say, that she is not reformed, and that they will reform her. The men of popery in her own bosom say, that *they* will reform her. My brethren, let men

of God reform her, but oh! deliver her not over to the papist and the infidel and the men of various heresies, and the popish protestant. It would be idolatry reforming true worship, darkness reforming light, ignorance reforming knowledge, falsehood reforming truth. Truly would it be the scene of Calvary repeated, the smiting with the hands, the purple robe and reverence in mockery, the thorns in the temples, and the spear in the side, Jew and Gentile, scribe and Pharisee, priest and people, combining together to inflict the death. No—no—let every man's watchword be "Let us hold fast our profession"—let us sigh and cry over the abominations of our land and our church, but let us hold fast Christ our High Priest, the Son of God in the heavens.

"Let us *hold fast* our profession." Let nothing ensnare us to let it go. The promises of treacherous friends, the threats of open enemies, the sophistries of foolish men, the dazzling lights of a boasting self-wise generation,—let nothing tempt us to *let go*. Let the watchword be against them all—Jesus is our High Priest, the Son of God in the heavens.

"Let *us* hold fast our profession." Other men may fall before the Dagon of papal infidelity, and bow the knee to the Baal of liberalism,—kings on their thrones (God preserve our Queen from the guilt and the woe !) and senators in their seats and ministers in their pulpits and the people in their grades and callings. The legislature may take the harlot into its embrace, as it has done, and rulers may mangle the word of God and teach the people popery, as they are doing in Ireland, and call it education—all may be faithless to their God and his Christ. But let not *us*, us here, us of this church, be faithless. Let us lift up our hands and our hearts unto God in gratitude for his mercies of past days in giving us light and deliverance from the papacy, and in prayer for the spirit which can yearn in love and gentleness and meekness over the poor victims of the papacy. And with the praise and the prayer let us hold fast Jesus the High Priest of our profession and God's Son in the Heavens. And now come and celebrate—not offer up, but celebrate—the Lord's death and sacrifice in love, and faith, and assurance of hope:

SERMON II.

BAPTISM.

JOHN III. 5—“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

MEN and brethren, you are aware that opinions of the saddest kind are, at this moment, floating up and down the religious world—opinions involving two opposite heresies; the one making baptism by water regeneration *in itself*, which is naked popery, and the other denying, by implication, any validity to it, which is naked infidelity. It is the clear duty of him, who would approve himself a faithful servant to his master, to encounter heresies of all kinds, and to wrestle against spiritual wickedness in all places, whether high or low. I fear that the importance of baptism is but little appreciated, its nature but little understood, and its object much perverted. And I purpose to address myself to it as to a mystery of God, which it is no marvel that carnal and ungodly men should pervert, and men of loose opinions should undervalue, but as to a mystery, containing a solemn truth from the mind of God, and which it becometh the church rightly to understand.

Our Lord has, unquestionably, connected baptism with salvation; in what way, and to what extent, it will be the object of this discourse to endeavour to set forth. I shall therefore shew, 1. The doctrine of regeneration, which is salvation—2. How baptism is connected with it—3. What constitutes perfect baptism—and, 4. That the administration of the outward part of it, which is water, is unto all persons.

1. The doctrine of regeneration, which is salvation.

Hearken to our Lord, in ver. 3, “Except a man be born again (from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—The necessity, here stated, of being born again arises from something in the nature and constitution of man. And what is that but the fallenness of his nature, and the sinfulness of his constitution? When he came first out of the

hands of God, he was "good," even God's very image; but when he fell into the hands of the devil, he became evil—his nature became evil, his constitution became evil—and, as a tree must bear its own proper fruit, so man must bear his, which is evil. So that when a man commits sin, he acts *according to his nature*; and when a man goes on acting according to his nature to the end of his threescore years and ten, he passes off into everlasting death, for the wages of sin is death. You sometimes hear men palliating or even defending an act of sin, such as lust, or covetousness, or drunkenness, or vanity, or revenge, or over-reaching, by saying, that it is very *natural*—and they give it its right epithet, although they little think, that in so calling it they describe themselves, or whosoever commits it, as acting according to a nature, which, of itself, will bring its possessor to everlasting death. If you would hear God describing this nature in its universal characteristics, hearken to Eph. iv. 18, "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Our Lord calls this nature, as it is elsewhere called in the Word, *flesh*, "that which is born of the flesh (the natural birth) is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit (the birth from above) is spirit," ver. 6. When man fell, God left him to his fleshliness, with a natural light of conscience, just testifying to the goodness which once was in him, but without any natural power of holiness, "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." (Rom. vii. 18.)

Here, then, we have firm footing, something to start from. We see from what, sin, in any man, proceeds—from his flesh, his nature. If any man—if any man here—be an adulterer, or a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a covetous man, or a thief, or a reviler—if he be a man of hatred, or of strife, or of emulations, or of wrath, or of sedition, or of heresy, or of envyings, or of revellings—his sin proceeds from his flesh, which is his nature; and such a man, so living, and so dying, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It is no marvel, then, that our Lord said, "ye must be born again"—it is no marvel, that that was the universal message, which God sent into the world, "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God*." (John, i. 13.)

Regeneration, therefore, or being born again, is salvation.

2. How baptism is connected with regeneration, or salvation.

And here the true doctrine is, that baptism is not merely connected with it, but contains the very actuality of it. The text is an explana-

tion of ver. 3. Our Lord had said, as there recorded, " Except a man be born again (or from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, the enquirer, who had come to Jesus to be instructed in the kingdom of God, did not understand the Lord's teaching, and asked, how a man could be born (again) when he was old? The Lord answered, with the authority of a teacher sent from God, and not as the scribes, " Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born (again, that is,) of water and the Spirit, (except a man be born of baptism, in its two-fold form, in its two parts, of which water is one, and the Spirit the other,) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Baptism, therefore, proper baptism, perfect baptism, is regeneration; and salvation, regeneration, and baptism, are convertible terms.

3. What constitutes proper or perfect baptism?

Surely the answer is, *the water and the Spirit*. If either be wanting, it is not perfect baptism. If man administer the water, and the Lord administer not the Spirit, the baptism is not perfect. If the Lord administer the Spirit, and man administer not the water, neither is it perfect baptism. A man must be born of water *and* the Spirit. In the latter case, the baptism will be subsequently perfected, for the Lord takes care both of his ordinances and his children. He made them for each other. And his children, being wrought into obedience, and no longer fashioning themselves according to the former lusts in their ignorance, questioning this and cavilling about that, take up all his commandments, and keep all his ordinances; so that if the Lord administer the Spirit before man has administered the water, he will take care, that his ordinance shall not fall to the ground, and you will be sure to find the Spirit-born sinner coming under baptism of water. This was so, and of necessity, in the first preaching of the word. The Spirit accompanied the preaching, sinners grown into manhood were converted to believe on the Lord Jesus, and, being thus first born of the Spirit, were afterwards born of water. This you read of every where in the Acts, " Then they that gladly received his word (being born of the Spirit,) were baptized, (born of water)," ii. 41—" but when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (being born of the Spirit), they were baptized (born of water), men and women," viii. 11—" the eunuch said, See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart (being born of the Spirit), thou mayest be," and he was baptized, or born of water, v. 36—38.

This is so still of necessity, when preachers go into heathen countries—and may be so still in Christian lands, when the child of a quaker or a baptist, not born of water in infancy, is born of the Spirit in manhood.

Or the water may be first given and the Spirit afterwards, as perhaps in the case of thousands of saved persons, who were brought in infancy to baptism of water, and after years of worldliness, and sin, and hardness of heart, and deadness of conscience, come under the word and baptism of the Spirit.

Or the Spirit and the water may be given together, as in the case of thousands and tens of thousands of blessed children, who, being brought by their affectionate and believing parents to the Lord's ordinance, live out their day, or month, or year, and go into paradise;—or, as in the case of God's true children, who grow up into years—many, or, it may be, all of them, for aught we know of a certainty, for I believe that the great day, which is to bring all things into light, will bring into the clearest light to our wonder and joy many of God's mysteries, about which we now only conjecture, “then shall I know even as also I am known.” God had been with them at the font, the water and the Spirit had been given together, and the baptism had been perfected, but the Spirit had slept. He was the incorruptible seed, and could not perish; but he lay dormant, inactive, checked, grieved, repressed, during the rolling away of many years of forgetfulness of God, till the hour came, appointed from everlasting, when the eternal Father sent the word, the sermon, the prayer, the providence, the affliction, the mercy, which was to unlock the hidden Spirit, and He came forth in almighty energy, and turned the wanderer unto his God. Oh! many of God's children remember, when thus brought, like the man who had many devils, to their right mind and clothed, that they *had* a right mind before. They trace back their life, and remember the drawings of their everlasting God at the very earliest period of childhood, of which the mind can be conscious. They remember, when they used to go to their chamber and pour out to their everlasting Father that simple and beautiful prayer, “Our Father which art in heaven,” how they felt that he *was* their Father. They remember the joy they used to feel at the thought of going to heaven when they died, and they knew they should go there, for Jesus loved them, and gave himself for them. They remember, too, their hatred of sin—how they would not commit sin for the world—how they would not lie, nor be angry, nor say an unkind thing, nor have an unkind temper, nor do an unkind act, because it would grieve

and displease God,—and when they did, how they would confess it to him, and to their dear parent, and pray for forgiveness, and feel the forgiveness they prayed for. Oh! this *was* their right mind! They lost it in after years, and wandered about a cold, dead, charnel-house world, possessed with many devils, wounded and naked, till Jesus met them and restored them. Oh! I say, this *was* their right mind. How came they by it? Go three or four years back, and you find them at the font, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—there were they born of water and the Spirit.

Oh! brethren, great is the mystery of godliness, look where you will. Great is the mystery of baptism! Then shut it up where God has shut it up, even with himself. It is as the mystery of the Tri-une Jehovah. It is as the mystery of God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh. I know it not in its depth. I know it not in its fulness. But this I know, that if any man be not born of water, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And this I know, that if any man be not born of the Spirit, neither can he enter into the kingdom of God.

I therefore dare not call baptism with water a form, a shadow, a sign, as some do, for I hold it as an ordinance, a substance, an actuality. Neither dare I call it necessarily *in itself* a substance, and conveying *in itself* salvation, as others do, even the papists, and (with shame and sorrow I say it) many of our protestant brethren in this our day.—If it were so—if the Spirit necessarily accompanied the water, none could perish, none of that countless company of baptized drunkards, and adulterers, and fornicators, and covetous men, and murderers, and revilers, and thieves, and extortioners, and men of hatred, and wrath, and strife, and seditions, and heresies, and envyings, and revellings, and such like, who live in sin and die in sin—none of them could perish. But they *do* perish, and so God's Spirit was not given out with the water of their baptism. For God's Spirit, which is God the Holy Ghost, is Almighty, and cannot fail to bring God's purpose to maturity, and wherever God sends him, He sends him to bring the poor sinner to salvation. And so I know, that there may be baptism by water without the Spirit. And so I know, that, if a man be not born of the Spirit, though he be born of water, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God. For I read, and let every man hear, “He (in baptism or out of baptism) that believeth not shall be damned,” although it is equally true, and let every man hear, “he that believeth and *is* baptized (baptism being as necessary as faith) shall be saved,” (Mark,

xvi. 16.) And I read, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," (Gal. v. 16.) And I read, "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," (v. 24.) And I read, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision (the type of baptism) availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision (the type of want of baptism), but a new creature (which is faith working by love)," vi. 15. And I read, that baptism as our ark "doth also *now* save us (as in the deluge, Noah's ark did save the eight souls that perished not), not the putting away of the filth of the flesh (the actual work of the water), but the answer of a good conscience towards God (the actual work of the Spirit)," 1 Pet. iii. 21.

If a man were to say to me, how is it that all are not saved in baptism—that all have not the Spirit? I might give him a human reason and say, that it was from lack of faith in the parents, or in the spiritual representatives of the child, or in the minister, who gave out the water—there was nothing in them to bring down the blessed Spirit—all in them was form and nothing else, mockery and nothing else. But I might also say, 'I am a worm, and dust, and ashes, and know not—God gives not an account of his matters to man—God is a sovereign God, and does what he will with his own—the Spirit is his own, and mercy is his own, and He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and the Spirit quickeneth whom he will—all are brought under baptism, the seal of the covenant according to which Jesus died for *all*, and as the pledge of the universality of his redemption, that the sovereignty of God may stand in the election of his own *out of* all, for it is "the children of the promise," and not "the children of the flesh," who are *counted for the seed*, as it is written, "being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God *according to election* might stand;" and so, when the children of promise are born and brought to baptism, God gives to them the Spirit, who is "the Holy Spirit of promise," but withdraws him from the children of the flesh.'

The true doctrine, therefore, is, as God teaches us in Tit. iii. 5, that "according to his mercy he hath saved us by the washing of regeneration (the water) *and* renewing of the Holy Ghost (the Spirit)"—and in Heb. x. 22, that our hearts are "sprinkled from an evil conscience (which is the Spirit), *and* our bodies are washed with pure water (which is the water)"—and in 1 Pet. iii. 21, that as the souls in Noah's ark *were saved by water*, so baptism saves us also now by water, *and* the answer of a good conscience towards God, which is the Spirit.

4. The administration of the outward part of baptism, which is water, is unto all persons.

It is an ever-blessed truth, that Jesus died for all men, gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time, was a propitiation not only for the elects' sins, but for the sins of the whole world, taking them away. Jesus was man, and so belongs to every man, as every man's brother and every man's Saviour—and so the ordinance, which is to bring men to salvation, belongs to every man born into the world. The text says in the original, "if *any* be not born of water and the Spirit;" and so baptism belongs to the infant, for Jesus died for the infant, and to those of riper years, for Jesus died also for them. It belongs to the infant, whose faculties have not ripened into actual sin, but who was born in a sinful nature, and so is a child of wrath and needs to be born again. It belongs to those of riper years, whose sinful nature has been matured into sinful acts, and who, born as heathens in a heathen land, or born in a Christian land of heathen parents, that despised or neglected baptism, have not yet come under the ordinance.

Our church, therefore, overlooking no aspect of God's truths, and desirous of bringing all within the fold of his saving ordinance, has a service in her prayer-book both for adults and infants, and bids you cherish for yourselves and your children the truth of baptism.

What, then, would I say to you? I would say this: Let the truth of baptism be strengthened and deepened in your spiritual affections and understandings. Understand it, love it, cherish it. Think much of the text of to-day. Apply it to your dear children, of the growth of a day or of the growth of years. Do not risk their salvation on any self-notion of your own. Christ has said—he that is true has said—he that will judge you by his truths has said—he that is over all, God blessed for ever, has said—" Except *any*" (child or man) " be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Understand the truth of baptism.—Do not say, in reference to baptism, that the blood of Jesus is efficacious for all—beautiful truth as it is in itself—and there leave it. Remember, that the blood of Jesus needs to be applied *individually*, or it is not efficacious individually. There is, therefore, one thing necessary besides; and that is, to be born of the Spirit. The child is born in sin, and, to go to heaven, must be renewed, and changed, and born again. If he comes not under baptism and dies, where, I ask, is the warrant for believing that he ever underwent the renewal, and was born again of the Spirit? No where—

I answer, no where. It is an awful answer, but the scripture of God gives no other; and I believe the scriptures of God, and not the fancies and questionings of man.

Do you tell me of uncovenanted mercies? Oh! would you risk your poor child's salvation on such a phrase as that? I know of no such mercies. The Lord's mercies are *covenant* mercies—mercies, which he has promised to those who receive his covenant, and enter into it. If the phrase has a tangible meaning at all, it can only be in reference to cases, where, from the nature of the circumstances, baptism has been impossible. For God may make exceptions where man may not, and surely impossibility may be God's exception. The phrase cannot have reference even to heathen lands, where the inhabitants live and die without hearing of God's covenant in Christ; for God has bound himself by a covenant as to them, and will judge and receive them according to it. It is the covenant of the natural conscience—"when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness." (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) And these, in heathen lands, with their covenant of conscience, are ten thousand times safer, being judged without the gospel, than the heathens, who live in Christian countries, where God hath sent the message of his mercies, and despise the covenant which contains them, and the ordinance which seals them. Oh! it shall, it must, be more tolerable for the uncovenanted Tyres and Sidons of the world, than for them.

Love the truth of baptism.—Love it for your children. God enters—God *does* enter—into covenant with children in spite of the infidelity of the unhappy baptist. He did so of old in the ordinance of circumcision; he does so still in the ordinance of baptism. Let every man beware of cutting off his child from God's covenant. God held the uncircumcised child of old as having broken his covenant, "He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you," and he who is not circumcised, "that soul shall be cut off from my people, *he*" (the child eight days old) "*hath broken my covenant.*" The Lord's principles are unchangeable, for *he* is unchangeable, and is made up to us of revealed principles. The *forms* of his covenants change, but his *principles* never. The form of the Jewish covenant changed in the sacrifices, when Christ came and headed them up in himself; but not the principle, which was, that "without

shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. ix. 22, where this is reasoned out.) The form of the Jewish covenant changed in the seal, when Christ came and substituted the Gentile baptism for circumcision ; but not the principle, which was entering into covenant with children. And God holds the unbaptized Gentile child as having broken his covenant, as he did the uncircumcised Jewish child. And the Baptist and the Quaker have to answer to the Lord for the awful sin of cutting off their children from the covenant of God, for out of the covenant of God and a heathen is an unbaptized person.

Oh ! love baptism. God gives out the Spirit to the poor, unconscious infant. Why not ? Thou unhumbed questioner, in reason, why not ? Every faculty of the future man is in that unconscious infant, just born into capability of immortal life—reason, memory, thought, imagination, all the faculties which are to come out in such beautiful order hereafter, are there, there *now*, in that unconscious infant—and why not the Spirit, when the Lord's ordinance is obeyed, the Spirit, who is to form it into meetness for immortal bliss and glory ?

Cherish the truth of baptism.—Cherish it for the sake of your country as well as of your children. We live in fearful times. The truths of God seem to be trampled down on all sides. The plague-spot of spiritual wickedness is in high places, and our laws are become tainted with it. Time was—when protestants and Christians were faithful to their God—that none could be a senator, and assist in making laws for his country, who did not avow his belief in God and his Christ. But, now, tests and barriers are gone. And the Socinian, who mocks at the atonement of the Son of God, and the Quaker, who denies the ordinance of baptism, and the papist, who is an idolater and worships the Virgin Mary, and the men in the gross, who are loose in all notions and deny that God's truths have anything to do with the government of mankind,—such men as these are now our legislators ; and it is no marvel if our laws shall be without religion. A law of this kind is just now in force, which strikes at the very root of the truth of baptism—a law, not made, it is true, for churchmen, but for men of heresies and superstitions—the tendency of which is, by establishing a civil registration of births, to supersede, and make the people indifferent to the truth of, baptism. For this reason cherish baptism the more.

And, oh ! pray over your children in baptism, and believe for them in baptism. The man, who would bring God down to the level of his own reason, asks, where is faith in the infant ? No where ; but the

questioner knows not, or refuses to know, the beautiful fact, that God gives out blessings to one for the sake of the faith and prayer in another. What *said* Jesus to the father of the possessed child, in answer to his prayer to Christ to help him? “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” And what *did* Jesus to the possessed child, in answer to the father’s confession, “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief?” He healed him, and the spirit came out of him. (Mark, ix. 17—26.) And so did he heal the sick of the palsy, and forgive him his sins, because of the faith of those who were round the sick man’s bed. (Matt. ix. 2—7.)—My dear brethren, your infants cannot pray or believe for themselves. Plead the Lord’s promises, rest upon them, and pray over your children in baptism, and believe for them. Oh! I say, have faith, seek faith, labour with the Lord for faith. You *must* “ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed: for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” (James, i. 6, 7.) Let the prayer for your infants be, that they may be **BORN OF THE SPIRIT**; and remember our Lord’s golden rule, “all things are possible to him that believeth.”

SERMON III.

THE CHURCH.

1 TIM. III. 15—“*The house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*”

MEN AND BRETHREN,—God is a God of order, not of disorder. Order is the result of fixed principles, acting by fixed rules. God does not produce order by his direct agency, which is the agency of miracles, but by his indirect agency, which is the agency of cause and effect. The order, which we see in nature, is not effected by his immediate interference, but by fixed principles, acting by fixed rules upon the matter, of which the natural world is composed. Harmony and order are thus produced from generation to generation, in every part of the material world, so that those, who follow nature into her secret places, and study her in her secret systems, can tell the eclipses of the sun and the changes of the moon, and even when comets are to appear, for years and years to come.

These principles are gathered up and developed in combination, or a body, and then God assigns the body an office. For instance : principles (not to speak very philosophically) are gathered up and developed in combination in air and water, and thus God has assigned certain definite offices to these bodies in the material world. And it is because each performs its own office, and not the office of the other, that harmony and order are produced ; but if either were to go aside from its own, and break in upon the, office of the other, if air were to assume the province of water, or water of air, confusion and disorder would be the result.

If we were to reason by analogy—if we were to reason on what we had not seen from what we do see—if we were to deduce probabilities concerning something which God had not done from what he has done—we should say, looking at all this, that, if God were to send

forth a system of salvation to fallen men, he would make it a system of order, and would gather up principles in combination or a body, and assign it an office: and just so we find it. Take man in his fallen nature as the material, on which God has to work in bringing out salvation in him. The agency of the ever-blessed Trinity, conviction of sin, conversion, faith in the given Saviour, sanctification, holiness, union with Christ—these are principles, acting upon men. Gather them up in combination into a body—that is, first develope them in the individual believer, and then concentrate them in a number of believers—and the body forms the church. And to the church, so gathered up, God has assigned an office, and that office is to preserve and maintain the truth.

The gathering up of the Lord's truths in combination is to be dated from the day of Pentecost. It was then, that the Holy Ghost was given out in fulness to the Church of God. It was then, that all things necessary to the well-being of the members of the church in collective bodies, as well as of each member individually, (and truly what is good for members collectively, is good for each member separately) began to be "set in order." It was then, therefore, that church-order began, which is the embodying of rules and principles for the government of church-communities. The Holy Ghost instituted the apostleship, gave the apostles, whether in church-council, or speaking by letter or orally, authority to lay down rules and "set in order," and inspired them with the wisdom of order, and the rules of government from the Lord Christ, the head. This was the promised province of the Holy Ghost. The day before the crucifixion, the Lord said—"When he, the Spirit of truth, *is come*, he will guide you into all truth he shall receive of mine and shew it unto you." On the day of ascension, the Lord said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, according to the promise—according to the promise, he executed his province—and as the result of both promises in fulfilment, St. Paul says, "*We have the mind of Christ,*" (1 Cor. ii. 16.)

Accordingly out of the mind of Christ Paul writes this epistle to Timothy, and he writes it "by the commandment of Christ." The "blessed God" had committed unto his trust "the glorious gospel," which he committed to the trust of Timothy, "this charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy;" and, therefore, by the authority vested in him from the blessed God, he gives out rules for Timothy's private

guidance and for the government of the churches. Having first adverted to some heretics, whom he had delivered over unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme, he proceeds to set forth rules concerning praying for kings and for all that are in authority, (authority being an ordinance of God,) and concerning men and women contradistinctively, in worship. He then proceeds to "set in order" matters concerning bishops and deacons, such as what should be their personal character and qualifications, particularly as to their aptness to teach and fitness to rule, *teaching and ruling* being their especial ordinance. And he concludes this point by saying, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly, but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth; and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness,"—these church-rules are necessary to be given out and to be observed, in order that the church may be indeed the pillar and ground of the truth, for she is to set forth and to maintain the mystery of godliness, which is unquestionably great, even this—"God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Now see—

1. The meaning which the word *church* here bears;
2. The *office* of the church; and—
3. Upon what *principle* it carries out its office.

1. The meaning of the word *church*.—*Church* has different significations in scripture, and yet all coming from one root and meaning one thing, namely, the principles of God in combination, or a body. Sometimes it signifies the saved body of Christ, chosen from among men to live with him in endless glory, when the day of his glory cometh, as in Matt. xvi. 18, "Upon this rock will I build *my church*, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and in Eph. v. 25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved *the church*, and gave himself for it." Sometimes it signifies the whole visible body all over the world, where Christ's name is named, as in Acts ii. 47, "And the Lord added to *the church* daily such as should be saved," and in many similar passages. Sometimes it signifies an assembly of faithful men, part of the visible body, one room in the house of God, as in 1 Cor. i. 2, "Unto *the church* of God, which is at Corinth," and in xi. 18, "When ye come together in *the church*," and in Rev. i. 4, "John to the *seven churches* which are in Asia," and in many other passages.—

Remember, that these different significations all contain one common meaning, namely, of a *body*. I can give you no rule to ascertain its particular meaning in each passage as you read it. It is only by practical familiarity with the Word, with God's mode of thinking and speaking in the Word, that you can ascertain it—that spiritual instinct, which seizes the mind of God, “He that is spiritual judgeth all things.”

In the text it signifies the whole catholic visible body on earth. It is here called *the house of God*, in the same sense of *universality*, as belongs to the same illustration, *house or building*, in Ephesians ii. 19, “Fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building (*the whole church*) fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye *also* (being a *part* of the whole church) are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” We have also the same universality in the same figure in 2 Tim. ii. 20, “In a great house (in which are *all vessels*) there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, (the saved part of the body, sanctified and meet for the Master's use) but also of wood and of earth (the unsaved part of the body, unsanctified and unmeet.)” And also in Heb. iii. 6, where the faithfulness of Christ “as a Son over his own house, whose house are we” of *the whole world*, Gentile and Jewish, is contrasted with the faithfulness of Moses as a servant over his house, which was the whole house of Israel.

It is, therefore, unquestionably clear, as the first truth, that there is a *catholic visible body on earth*, called the church.

2. The *office* of the church.—The church is to be the pillar of Christ, **THE TRUTH**, who is the Son over his own house. The office of a pillar is to sustain and preserve the building from falling, to maintain it in all its proportions, and to keep it from getting out of order. And, lest it should be imagined, that the church is needed as a pillar only for ornament, the word *ground* is added, which, if you look at the marginal reading, you will find to signify *stay*.

It is, therefore, unquestionably clear, as the second truth, that the office of the church is to be the *support and stay* of the truth.

3. On what *principle* the church carries out its office.

The church carries out its office on the same great principle of *order*. Christ is the truth, and it is Christ, of whom the church, in the Lord's economy, is to be the pillar and ground. To this end, and

on the same great principle, Christ has constituted himself the Head of the church; and has instituted a degree in the church to administer the Word, which is himself, and the sacraments, which he ordained and in which he dwells and is manifested.

Brethren, let us consider, first, *the Headship*, and, then, *the degree*.

First,—*the Headship*. Christ is the head of the church, “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the *Head of the church*, and he is the Saviour of the body (the church, of which he is the head, the head and the body together making up the church),” Eph. v. 23. Again “He (God’s dear Son) is the *head of the body, the church*,” (Col. i. 18.)

So that you can tell the church, in its universality, or a part of the church, in its subdivisions, by this mark. If a body of men gather themselves together in church-membership, and take not the Lord Christ for their head, such a body would be no church, no part of the church, of the living God. And if such a body were to rise up, and even spread themselves over the whole earth, and adopt all the details, even to the minutest point of church-membership, as laid down in the word, and yet were not to take Christ as the sole universal head, but were to make another, a visible universal head, ascribing headship to him as the one ruler over all the churches of the world, and taking him for their Christ in government, as the Son over his own house, they would not be the church of the living God, but they would be the church of Anti-Christ, as the name denotes, and as the description sets forth, “He as *God* sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”—Such is the church of Rome. Now I do not speak of the arrogance of the church of Rome. It is no arrogance to claim God’s vice-regency and God’s rule, if God has laid them on her. It is no arrogance to exercise authority, where God has given it. But the pope of Rome claims universal headship, as the son over *his own* house—takes to himself the attributes of the Lord Jesus in forgiving sin—and thus assumes “the keys of hell and of death,” as the Son of man, the first and the last. He is, therefore, ANTICHRIST, and whatever describes him as less than that, however true and forcible the description may be, describes him short of the mark. He is ANTICHRIST, and his church is not *the* church, nor *a* church of Christ, but a form of blasphemy.

Then *the degree*. Christ has instituted a degree in the church, to administer his word and sacraments, and has given, as a seal to it, an

outward sign, which is the laying on of hands. This laying on of hands is to be by certain persons who have authority to do so. The church was set in order after the Spirit was given out in Pentecost. Paul and the rest of the apostles had the authority to give out this degree of ministry; so that none could be the ministers of the church but such as were ordained to it by the apostles, or by those so ordained; and so on successively from age to age, those ordained ordaining others, through all generations to the end of the dispensation.

This was the Lord's order of ministry, equal in *principle* to the Levitical order in the former dispensation. In that dispensation, men might have the spirit of prophesying given to them—they might be good men, talented, mighty in eloquence, full of every good word and work—they might possess, to the eye of their fellow-men, every quality which could fit them for the office—nay, they might have every other qualification, but if they lacked one, that is, if they were not of the tribe of Levi, they could not have the order of ministry. This was God's *principle*. Remember, God's *principles* are unchangeable. The forms of his covenants change, but his principles never. He, the unchangeable God, “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,” is to us made up of principles, and revealed in principles, which must be as unchangeable as himself. Who will say that they can change?

Here his principle is, *choosing an order*. In the Jewish dispensation, it was a *family* which was chosen—the family of Levi. In the Gentile, it is a *line* which is chosen—the line of succession from the apostles downwards. And so we find it in the Word. First, St. Paul says to Timothy, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy (the spirit of prophesying then in the churches), with the *laying on of the hands of the presbytery*,” (1 Tim. iv. 14.) Again, he reminds Timothy of this, in 2 Tim. i. 6—“Stir up the gift of God, *which is in thee by the putting on of my hands*,” and, in ver. 14, “*That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in thee*.” And in like manner he reminds the minister, Titus, of the authority which was vested in him, “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke *with all authority*,” (Tit. ii. 15.) And having thus laid down the rule of order, he then commands the same thing to Timothy and Titus as to others. To Timothy he says, “The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same *commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*,” (2 Tim. ii. 2,) and so on through

all successive generations. In doing this, he cautions Timothy to take heed to himself, and to exercise discernment and discretion, "*Lay hands suddenly on no man,*" (1 Tim. v. 22.) To Titus he says, (i. 5,) "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders in every city as I had appointed thee,*" who were to ordain others, and they others through all successive generations. And he expressly lays a strong injunction on Timothy to be stedfast to his ministry, although it would be rejected in after times, and teachers who are no ministers, would be followed, "For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but *after their own lusts (desires, wills) shall they heap to themselves teachers, but watch thou in all things, make full proof of thy ministry.*" (2 Tim. iv. 3—5.)

So that you can tell a church also by this mark. If the minister in any church, or assembly of men, do not derive his ministry in the Lord's line by succession from the apostles, that church, or assembly, is no church of Christ's. The ministry in it is self-appointed—it is not after the appointment of the Lord—and the church, in which it is exercised, is no pillar or ground of the truth.

It is, therefore, unquestionably clear, as the third truth, that the church is to carry out its office *on the principle of order.*

Now, my brethren, let us apply these truths to present things and present times, in our own land.

Our church is the *house of God*, the church of the living God, in this land—the pillar and ground of the truth here—the English branch of the catholic church of God—the English apartment, or room, of the universal house of God—being able to trace up her ministry, through the intervening ages, to the apostles, the source of ministry, and having in her all the truths and ordinances of the Lord of the church.

She is so, *first*, in reference to the popish heresy.

The church of Rome is at once struck out of the list of claimants for being held the true church here, or a true church anywhere, for the reasons already given. That church is ANTICHRIST, taking the pope for its head and its foundation, and building itself upon a propitiatory priesthood and mediatorial saints, and traditions, which make the covenant of God by Christ and his prophets and apostles, of none effect. Our church takes the Lord Jesus for her head, and is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." No man can gainsay this. The whole race of

controversialists may be challenged to gainsay it. They may take a rent here and a patch there, and hold them up in mockery to the gaze of an unthinking world—in their eagerness of party declamation, they may make the rent worse, and give an ideal and preposterous magnitude to the patch—but they cannot take our church, with all her blemishes, even when worked up into corruptions, to the light of scripture, and lay her to the line of scripture, and gainsay the position, that in doctrines, and truths, and ordinances, she is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.”

Her enemies sometimes speak of the king as her head. But it is not so in their sense. He is her civil and temporal head, as he is the head of all other bodies in the state, whether secular or ecclesiastical, giving protection and sanction to her laws and revenues, as he does to the laws and revenues of dissenting communities; and if that constitutes headship, he is as much their head as hers—and if that constitutes the union of church and state, they are as much united to the state as she is. But his *spiritual* headship—where is it? Although the reformation placed him, in the very circumstance of power, in opposition and contradistinction to the pope of Rome, and although all the power he has, and whatever peculiarities may be found mingling with it, were purposely, and almost as the very point at issue, transferred to him from the pope, yet where is his *spiritual* headship? Where, I say, is the *spirituality* of his headship? Can he absolve from sin? Can he grant indulgences to sin? Can he confer the ministry? Can he give out laws of spiritual government? Can he interfere with worship, or come between the minister and his people, or between the people and the sacraments? Can he exercise any function in the church in any spiritual thing? Can he, in any thing, stand between you and me? I am sure there can be but one answer to this. And where, then, is the *spiritual* headship of the king? I know, there is a sort of usurpation running through our civil code, which gives occasion to ignorant men thus to speak. The fact is, that our church came out of the popish form, the “mystery of iniquity,” which began to work in St. Paul’s days, and grew up to maturity in the days of the Council of Trent, and she was glad to avail herself of the civil power, at the time of her struggle, against the then overwhelming power of the pope. She trusted, more than became her, in an arm of flesh, for which I do not defend her. Nay, it was that very thing which made the reformation

incomplete—and it remains to be seen, in the times which are coming, whether she will complete her reformation, and trust more to her God and less to man, with the faith which should ever grace her walk, or fall beneath the murderous knives of popery and liberalism. But she came out—whatever blemish clave to her, whatever faithlessness dis-honoured her—she came out—oh! never be it forgotten, never be it unstated, never be it permitted to slip from the knowledge of men—she came out with Christ and the apostles and prophets. A magistrate said the other day, in adjudicating some quarrel between the children of a protestant, and the children of a popish, school, that one religion, if held in sincerity, was as good as the other. Oh! brethren, I blush for such protestantism, and I grieve over such ignorance. And I say, never let us allow any man, whatever be his office, or how high soever his authority, to assert without rebuke, that the form of blasphemy and idolatry and human priesthood—that the church of ANTICHRIST—is as good as the church, which takes Jesus for her head, the scripture alone for her guide, the Spirit for her teacher, and the apostles and prophets for her foundation, Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. Our protestant-popish brethren say, that she is built on Christ and the apostles, and *the fathers*. But I say, No—with my loudest voice, I say, No. The fathers form the *first* working of the “mystery of iniquity.” And I will not take her to the polluted waters to find her source, but will lift her over them to the pure fountain, the everlasting Word.

Secondly, Our church is the *house of God* in this land, in reference to other churches, or assemblies.

She takes the Lord Jesus for her head, and is built on the apostles. They indeed take Christ professedly for their head, and are professedly built on the apostles. But in reality, as churches, they reject Christ as their lawgiver, for they respect not the law which he has given for ministry; and as churches, they reject the apostles as their founders, for they respect not the ministry which is derived from them. Therefore they have no ministry; and whatever assembly has no ministry is not a church of God. I have been told, by those who have made the history of the wanderings of the human mind their study, that there are upwards of seventy schisms in our land. Now God may have his children in them all. I neither doubt it nor dispute it, and God forbid, that I should desire to do either! Nay, I will gladly take it as a fact, and I rejoice, that the Lord rules evil for good,

and causes it to minister to his own glory and the salvation of sinners—and I know, also, that he pardons sin in his children, not imputing it to them, for the sake of Him who died to take it away, even forgiving the sin of breaking the oneness of faith, and teaching others so. But still, wherever there is no true ministry, there is no true church; and I dare not, to please men, say there is. And I take my stand by the side of the principles of the two covenants, and by the side of Moses and Paul, the enforcers and expounders of them.

You will remember, that on a certain occasion, as recorded in Numb. xi., the Lord “took of the spirit that was upon Moses, and gave it unto the seventy elders, and they prophesied; and the spirit also rested upon two men *in the camp*, and not in the tabernacle, and they prophesied *in the camp*.” And when some one, out of an ignorant zeal for the ministry (for there is a zeal for the ministry according to ignorance, and there is a zeal according to knowledge), ran and told Moses of it, and when Joshua, at that time ill-instructed in the things of the ministry, begged Moses to forbid them, Moses replied, that he wished all the Lord’s people would prophesy. But Moses did not recognise the prophesiers as *ministers*. He rejoiced that the Lord put his spirit upon his people, and that they gave out his mind and his truths to his glory and the good of men. But this did not, and could not, allow him to receive them as *ministers*, or to sanction their being received as such by others, neither had they the *ministry*, from having the spirit of the Lord resting on them, inasmuch as they were not of the family appointed of the Lord exclusively to exercise the ministry. That this was so, you have an undoubted proof in the awful event, recorded in the 16th chapter of the same book, when an attempt was made by the people in conjunction with some schismatical claimants of the ministry, upon the plea of the holiness that was in them (both in the congregation and the claimants), to set aside the Lord’s rule. Listen to the record: “They gathered themselves *against* Moses and *against* Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you,” (they were proud, and loved not subordination,) “seeing all the congregation are *holy*, every one of them, and *the Lord is among them*.” That was their plea. But Moses knew the matter in its reality, and was not deceived by words, and he said to the claimants, to whom the Lord had given certain offices in the service of the tabernacle, “Seek ye the *priesthood also?* For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together AGAINST THE LORD,”

for it was against him and his rule they rebelled. You know the issue. They agreed to put the matter on the morrow before the Lord, and leave it to his decision. The morrow came. They waited on the Lord with their censers and incense, for his decision—and he gave it : “ The ground clave asunder that was under them,” (the claimants of the priesthood and their adherents,) “ and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah and all their goods ; they, and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation.” All Israel fled at the cry of them ; but on the morrow, when their terror had subsided, they returned to their self-will and murmured against Moses and Aaron, and said with most marvellous obstinacy, “ Ye have killed the people of the Lord.” And the Lord was angry at their rebellious obstinacy against his rule, and he sent a plague amongst them, and fourteen thousand seven hundred perished, and Aaron stood at last between the dead and the living, and made, as the appointed minister, the appointed atonement, and the plague was stayed.

In like manner, when Paul speaks, in Phil. i., of some, who were preaching Christ of contention, not sincerely, but of envy and strife, he says, that he rejoiced, because every way, whether in pretence or truth, Christ was preached. But he did not recognise these preachers as *ministers*. He rejoiced, because Christ was preached, knowing that God rules all men and all things, evil men and evil things, for his glory, and leaving the preachers, and their motives to stand or fall to their own master. But neither this, nor any other, reasoning could allow him to receive them, or sanction their being received, as *the Lord's ministers*, inasmuch as they had not the Lord's appointed ministry.

And thus is it still. God is unchangeable in his principles. You see it to be so. You see that the God he is in the one Testament, he is in the other, “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ;” and they are exceedingly mistaken, who set the one against the other, and consider the principles of God in the one as differing from those in the other. The first Testament has waxed “ old,” and vanished away in its form and ceremonies, but not in its *substance*, nor in one single principle. The principle of Abel's sacrifice and of the Jewish sacrifices in the Old, is the principle of the Lamb's sacrifice in the New, namely, atonement by blood ; and the principle of circumcision in the Old is the principle of baptism in the New, namely, the seal of initiation into the

Lord's covenant, which in its character of universal applicability embraces infants, for the Lord entered into covenant with infants by circumcision. I will not argue the question any further here, having done so elsewhere.* But the line of distinction between *ministry* and teaching is clearly defined in scripture. If a man tells me, that he is a brother in Christ, and gives me evidence that the Lord has dealt with him in mercy and brought him into His blessed family, I receive him as such. If he goes on and tells me, that he is a *minister*, I ask him also for evidence of that—I ask him for his authority. His being a child of God gives him no authority, confers not the ministry. He may do, as the prophesiers in the camp and the preachers spoken of by Paul, did. He may benefit and instruct his fellow-men—he may tell out the truths he knows to others—he may teach and preach the word anywhere and to any, under scriptural restrictions and in scriptural decency and order. But, merely as one knowing the truth and able to teach it, he has no authority to exercise the office of a minister, and none but such as have themselves the true ministry can give it to him; that is, he has no authority to be *over* a people, and to dispense the ordinances *to* a people. It is that which constitutes the ministry, and no man can have the scriptural ministry, but he, who receives it in *God's mode and line*. All persons who exercise the ministry out of this line and order, exercise it without warrant from God; and the authority they plead is from men not authorized to convey the ministry. Paul tells Titus to "speak and exhort and rebuke with *all authority*." The Lord always vindicates his rules; and it therefore comes out in practical working, that those, who have not *the* ministry and yet exercise *a* ministry, do not exercise it with *all authority*. The congregation or the church has the authority and exercises it—they have it not. And again, the Lord vindicates his rule herein. For it will be ever found, that in all such ministries and churches there is a lack of truth, or an abounding of error, in some points or other.

My brethren, take heed to these things—do not cast them out—try them—carry them to the Word. I have found them there, after a slow and reluctant search, for they do not perhaps lie upon the surface. So may you find them there—but whether you do or not, there they are. Remember, they are based upon another principle of the Lord's,

* In "Letters to a Member of Parliament, on the present state of things," published by Nisbet, London.

even oneness :—“ There is *one body*, and *one Spirit . . . , one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,*” (Eph. i. 4. 5.) Pray for your church, the *one body* in this land. She may have her blemishes and wrongnesses in her framework, in her outward administration. Pray for her, help her, seek her purification. But you may not destroy her—you may not lift up your heel against her—you have eaten of her bread, and drank of her water, and lain in her bosom, and she has been unto you as a mother—and it would be in you as the sin of Judas, (John xiii. 18,) for which God smote him with the madness of self-murder.—Neither may you mock her sins and nakedness. You are her children; and it would be in you as the sin of Ham, for which God gave over his posterity to perpetual slavery. (Gen. ix.)— Neither may you leave her. The Lord said of the ministers of the apostate Jewish church, about to be judged with most awful judgment, they “ sit in Moses’ seat, all *therefore* whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, though they said and did not.” (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.) And the Lord continued the spirit of prophecy to Caiaphas, who sent Jesus to his death, because of *his office*, to which it belonged, although the man himself was a blaspheming apostate, “ This spake he not of himself, but *being high priest* that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation,” (John xi. 51.) And after Jesus at the ascension was carried up into heaven, his dear people, who saw him go, “ returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually *in the temple*, praising and blessing God,” even the temple which had become a guilty and an apostate thing in the Lord’s sight, (Luke xxiv. 51.) And in the same sinful and doomed temple did the pentecostal converts continue worshipping daily with one accord, (Acts ii. 46) and there did Peter and John go to pray at the hour of prayer, (iii. 1)—and there did Paul worship and walk “ orderly,” (xxi. ver. 24—27,) and, when he was smitten by command of the Jewish high priest and answered him with impatience, in ignorance of his being the high priest, he subsequently acknowledged his *authority* and reproved himself for his sin in so speaking, “ I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest, for it is written, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.*” (xxiii. ver. 2—5.) Yet what church was ever so corrupt and evil and apostate as the Jewish, even going on in its wickedness to the crucifying the Lord of life? What church ever called down upon it woes more awful for wickedness more awful? What church ever had its condemnation sealed in more fearful lan-

gnage, “ Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? ” What church ever hated Christ so much ? What church ever pursued the followers of the crucified One with more malignity ? And yet why did Christ, and the apostles, and the converts still worship in the Jewish temple, and recognise the authority of the successors of Moses ? Even because the Jewish church was the God-appointed church as long as God spared it. And when our blessed Lord gave out his last affecting exhortations to his sorrowing disciples, the evening before the crucifixion, he said to them, “ They shall *put you out* of the synagogue.” He did not tell them to put themselves out, or to teach others so ; but they were to bear witness to him and for him under the power of the Spirit *in the church*, and leave it to the Jews to put them out. So is it now. The believers in Jesus are to bear witness to him and for him *in the church*—they are to be **HIS WITNESSES** *in the church*—leaving it to the church in its apostasy, should its apostasy grow thereto, to put them out. But they may not leave it of their own self-will, nor sanction the leaving it in another, for it is still God’s church in the land.

Take heed, I say, brethren, to these things. Obey the Lord in them. It is a fearful controversy to array yourselves against the laws of the Lord’s government, and the principles of the Lord’s will. Ponder over *that* truth, and take heed to *this*, that “ the house of God, which is the church of the living God, is the **PILLAR AND GROUND OF THE TRUTH.**”

SERMON IV.

THE MINISTRY.

HEB. XIII. 17—"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

MEN AND BRETHREN,—I would again strike the chord of that beautiful truth, that God is a God of order. Every law, which he has given out to bind together and to keep together the natural creation, is but the manifestation of his own *character*, if such a human term as character may be applied to God. And so is every principle, which he has given out for the government of man, his *moral* creation. God's character is to bind together, as Satan's is to sever. His character is to gather into one, as Satan's is to break into a thousand pieces. God's principle, therefore, is order—Satan's, disorder. God sets up authority, subordination, and mutual dependence—Satan, self-government, equality, and independence. God brings out harmony and union—Satan, discord and separation. God's delight is to see men fulfilling the law of love, and dwelling together in unity—Satan's is to see them fulfilling the law of hatred, and dwelling apart from each other in divisions. Wherever you have the former principles, you have the elements of order and happiness—wherever you have the latter, you have the elements of confusion and misery.

God is a God of order. Look at the natural creation. How else could the pillars of the world have been sustained for six thousand years? Is it not by a system of order, operating on an infinitely complicated machinery—a machinery so complicated, that none but the faculties of Omnescience could analyze, as none but the power of Omnipotence could have created it? Is it not by the mutual dependence on each other of the ten thousand times ten thousand minute parts, which make the world up into a perfect whole? What for six thousand years has secured, from the glorious sun in the heavens, light to the mountain top, and the pencil-streak to the lowly flower at the base of it? Or what, for six thousand years, has caused the ocean-

tides in their deep bed, and the village rivulet with its glassy pebble visible at the bottom, to know their courses with unerring fixedness? Or what has gone on for six thousand years bringing the materials of existence out into actual being, all through the inconceivably infinite scale of animated nature,—from the wild beast, that roams the forest, to the animalcule, that is curled up in the fibre of a leaf—from man, with his threescore years and ten, to the insect that dances out its life in a summer's hour? You will say, Is it not God? Nay, but has not God linked the world together in a golden chain of unity? And is not every link ORDER, every link subordination, every link mutual dependence? Men speak of the *law of nature*. But I do not like the phrase. It stands in the place of God; and I like nothing, that stands in the place of God. It is an idea, not a substance, a philosophical prettiness, not an actual fact. It does not convey God to the eye of the mind, and I love to have God, not hidden beneath words, but brought out and seen, God in manifested agency, God as God. I would rather speak of God, as *ruling the natural world* by the principle of order, in unbroken operation. I think God speaks so in Gen. i.—“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light and God made two great lights, the greater light to *rule* the day, and the lesser light to *rule* the night, he made the stars also; and God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to *rule* over the day and over the night, and to *divide* the light from the darkness.”

God governs his moral world by the same principle of order. There is not an event in Providence, there is not a dispensation, there is not a dissolution of kingdoms, nor a perishing of a hair of the head, there is not a bitter in a man's cup, nor a joy in his spirit, but is the certain result, not of coincidences nor of accidents, but of fixed and continuous causes working from the Eternal Mind. And so in communities of men, God governs by the same principle. Wherever he is established, there is order, as wherever Satan is established, there is disorder. Is God in a government? There is order. Is he in a city? There is order. Is he in a family? There is order. Is he in a church? There is order.

The time will be, when God will be universally established in his moral world, and order will be universal, for the gathering together all

things *in one* (Eph. i. 10) is the great centre of future good in all the prophecies—when contention shall be swallowed up in subordination, independence in authority, self-will in obedience—and when men shall be no more divided, but be as one, not in union of love (the only point of brotherhood now, and alas! that an imaginary one,) but in *oneness of mind*, all having one mind and one will, and that the mind and will of God. Time was, when this *was* the state of things—when man and beast, the lamb and the lion, the wolf and the kid, lay down together, and all were happy in each other and all were happy in God, and there was but one will all over creation, and that will was God's will, coming out in all the detail of subordination, for what is obedience, but the principle of subordination in operation, and what is happiness but obedience in perfect fulness? But the Devil came and taught equality, “Ye shall be as gods,” and he taught knowledge as the cause of equality, “knowing good and evil,” and he taught a result, opposed to God's decree and declaration, “Ye shall not surely die.” In all this, he taught man's will as the *rule* of thought and action. God's doctrine is, “Thou shalt have none other gods but me;” the Devil's is, “Thou shalt have whatever gods thou choosest.”

The Devil is the great teacher still, and that is his doctrine. Trace the world of man through. Follow him, wherever he is congregated into social masses, and you will ever see these two great principles in active operation, and in active opposition to each other. You see God's principle, subordination, which is order, everywhere. You see it in the material world, in the sun and the moon and the stars of the heavens, and in the towering oak and the humble moss of the earth. You see it in the animal world, in the eagle of the mountain and in the fly of the brook. You see it in the mechanical world, in all the complexity of wheels and levers and pulleys, working together in dependence on each other. You see it in the political and social world, among men, women, kings, people, fathers, children, husbands, wives, masters, servants. You see it in the intellectual world, from the man who follows nature into her farthest hiding place, to him whose mind has little beyond the spring of instinct. You see it in the angelic world, cherubims and seraphims, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. You see it in the spiritual world, from him whose faith removes mountains in his path, to him who goes mourning all the day long. Nay, you see it in the godhead of the triune Jehovah, the Son

subordinate to the Father, and the Holy Ghost subordinate to the Father and the Son, and yet all perfectly equal, for subordination does not destroy *equality*—it only establishes *order*. And you see it in all the range from God to man, “The head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God”—subordination in every thing, and the result order. Against this, the Devil’s principle is ever in active operation ; and the melancholy result is, contention in governments, contention in cities, contention in families, contention in churches, bringing out the Devil’s doctrine of self-will and equality, and issuing in disorder and misery.

The end, then, of authority is order. God has produced it in all his worlds of material and immaterial existence, and in his world of providence, by the exercise of his own absolute authority in fixed modes of government. And he produces it among men, in the five great divisions of social relationship, by investing the minister, the magistrate, the master, the husband, and the parent, with authority from him ; and thus is he brought out, as the Governor of his moral world, in actual government, in these several headships. How else could he govern the world ?

Obedience, therefore, is the one great duty, which God has laid upon man, “Obey them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves.” God has given the record of his Son, in whom is eternal life, and he demands of his creature, man, to receive it—to receive it, is to submit to the authority of God. In this record, he has given out his laws on the thousand details of every day life, and binds them upon man—to take them up and obey them, is to submit to the authority of God. And in these five great relationships, in which every man is placed, whatsoever member of a church, whatsoever subject, whatsoever servant, whatsoever wife, whatsoever child, takes up and obeys the law laid upon him respectively, obeys not man, but God—and whosoever, in these respective relationships, resists or despises it, resists or despises not man, but God.

The doctrine of authority, leading to subordination, and issuing in order and happiness, is what the Lord is giving out to the church in the text of to-day. “Let *brotherly* love continue,” is one law of order, as set forth in ver. 1. Another is, as in ver. 7, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God, whose *faith* follow,” specified with greater minuteness in the text, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and *submit yourselves*.”

Now authority to be true and valid must be of God's conferring—it must have its source in God. The authority, which man takes to himself, or which man bestows on his fellow-man, has essentially no foundation; that is, it is the creation of circumstances, and depends on the varying events of society, and so is fleeting, capricious and uncertain; it is founded only on the expediency and opinions of the moment, which change into all hues and sometimes entirely disappear, and has no fixed hold on the consciences of men. On the contrary, that which is conferred by God is permanent and universal, belongs to all generations and all periods and all circumstances, is dependent upon nothing for its validity, and is ever binding on the consciences of mankind. Nothing can abrogate it. Men may rebel against it—they may resist it, they may think it unwise and inexpedient, and ill-adapted to existing circumstances, and may even cast it off—but they can never do so without guilt, nor with impunity, for it is of God, and God will ever vindicate his authority, whether it be directly in himself, or given out by him to man. Wherever God has conferred authority, *there* it is and for ever. It cannot be changed from its purpose, it cannot be transferred to another.

Again, authority implies *headship*. In the five great divisions of social relationship, the minister is the *head* of his church, the magistrate of the people, the master of the servant, the parent of the child, the husband of the wife. And Christ is the head of all.—So that it thus comes out as true, that whosoever despises the authority laid up in these several headships, despises not man, but God, for God in Christ is head over them all.

Again, authority in these several headships sets forth God in Christ to the world in the same relationship. Christ is “over all God, blessed for ever”—the High Priest of the people, King of nations, Lord of creation, Father of mankind, Husband of the church.

Authority, therefore, brings out God as the Governor of the world in actual government. How stands the matter in reference to the point before us? Even thus. God governs the churches in actual government by the authority, which he has vested in the ministers over them. This authority is God's government, given out in the line and order, which he has appointed from the days of the apostles to the present hour, and which no man may usurp, and no man change, and no man transfer. No other ministry is true—no other is binding on man—because no other has authority. This ministry is permanent,

universal, belongs to all generations and all periods and all circumstances, is dependent upon nothing for its validity, and is ever binding on the consciences of mankind—because it has authority from God. And a church, or assembly of men, without it has no government.

All authority, which is true and valid, will shew its truth and validity in the office, to which it is given. The authority of the ministry does this. Take the description of the church on Sunday, as *the house of God*. Christ, as the Son over his own house, is the head. The minister is the under-head, or steward, by the appointment of Christ. *Steward* is the name whereby he is called, and *stewardship* is his office, “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and *stewards of the mysteries of God*,” (1 Cor. iv. 1,) “a bishop (overseer, or ruler, of a church) must be blameless, as the *steward of God*,” (Tit. i. 7.) The word, in both passages, signifies literally, in the original, the *ruler of the house*, or one who *gives out the law to the house*.* And St. Paul is expressly shewing to the Corinthian church the exact position of ministers in the household. Much strife and division had arisen among the Corinthian believers about their ministers, and they seemed to be giving them not the under-headship, but the very headship. “Who, then,” he asks, “is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase, so then”—for ye are falling into man-idolatry, and giving the glory where the glory is not due—“so then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase;” therefore see our exact position and office in the house, and account us to be *the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God*, certainly not more, and certainly not less.

My brethren, you now see the office, which ministers hold in the house of the Lord. They are *stewards of his mysteries*, of the mysteries of his kingdom and of himself. Yea, “great is the *mystery of godliness*.” All men are to see what is the fellowship of this mystery, and the ministers are they who are to make all men see it, (Eph. iii. 9.) For this purpose are they stewards, and have the mysteries of the Lord committed to them, that they may give them out to men. Their office is to dispense and distribute the mysteries of God—God manifest in the flesh—God in the tri-une Jehovahship—

* οἰκονόμος.

God loving the sinner from everlasting in his Son—his Son's obedience unto death as the price of the sinner's redemption—the Holy Ghost revealing this love, and applying this obedience, to the sinner's heart—the Lord Christ's return in manifested glory, on the resurrection morning—baptism, the seal of it all, and the bread and wine, the memorial and pledge of it all;—these in their fulness, and yet in their separateness, with all their ten thousand bearings upon the wants and the sins of man, are given to the stewards, as rulers over the household, to distribute, milk to the babes and meat to those of riper years, to each his portion in due season.—This is the office of the stewards in the Lord's house.

Now there may be servants in the house, and there are, who receive these mysteries in greater power and fulness and love, than the stewards who distribute them; and God may be pleased to make them blessings to their fellow servants, in instructing the ignorant among them, praying for the prayerless, warning the unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, and doing all the other offices of love and kindness, which the grace of God teaches and enables those, who have it, to do to all around them. But still they are not *the stewards*. The mysteries are not committed to their keeping, and come not within their dispensing. And, if they were to take to themselves the stewardship over the household, or if their fellow-servants were to give it to them, it not being theirs to give but the Lord's, it would be usurpation, the house would be divided, the authority would be claimed by different persons, and envying and disorder and strife would be the result, and where these are, “there is confusion and every evil work.” Thus, if a member of this church, holier, and more spiritual, and living more in the light and presence of God, and more deeply taught in his mysteries, than your minister, so that no comparison could be made between us—if such an one were to rise up, like Korah and his colleagues, and claim the stewardship, it would be a sinful usurpation, he would have no authority to dispense the mysteries, and disorder and confusion would be the result. And if he were to go out of the church, and take numbers with him, and call in some self-appointed stewards to lay hands upon him, in imitation of the true form of imposition of hands, they might have prayer and praise, and the altar, and the priest's garb, and the golden calves, and the sacrifice, and all worship in perfect appearance and imitation, like Samaria of old, as you may read in the twelfth chapter of the first book of Kings; still he, the usurping

minister, would be no nearerer *authority*, for those who laid hands on him, and those who form his church, having no authority themselves, could confer none. And most probably, in a shorter or longer period, you would see the Lord vindicating his own doctrine of authority, and his own mode and line of it, by bringing out amongst them the consequences of a violation of it. Jealousy, or a spirit of pre-eminence, or caprice, or some other disobedient temper would creep in—or the leader would become more spiritual than his people, or his people than their leader—and so divisions would arise; and then, as they were united without authority, so have they no authority binding on their consciences to keep them together, and farther disorder and confusion would be the result.

We come, therefore—we *must* come—inevitably to the conclusion, that none can be the *stewards of the mysteries* of God without the fixed, scriptural, authority from him.

My brethren, the question has been ministerial authority, as derived from God by a direct line from the apostles, in contradistinction to self-appointed, or man-appointed, ministries. I have shewn you, on the one hand, that no obedience is due, and none in practical working is ever given, to self-ministries, for God is a jealous God, and so causes things to work as that his authority shall not be evidenced where it is not; and on the other hand, that those, who are ministers in the Lord's mode and line, are in stewardship over his household to dispense and distribute his mysteries. And I trust, I have shewn you, that this is no arbitrary appointment, no appointment without a cause; and while I would be jealous, and would teach you to be jealous for the Lord's *absolute* authority, and would never encourage you presumptuously to ask of him a reason for his matters, but to be satisfied, that what he says and does is absolute goodness and love and wisdom, yet I hope it is no infringement on this humble reverence to have searched into this appointment, and to have seen, that it is to bring out his great principle of government, ORDER.

Here will I leave it, and, I hope, on your minds for ever. It will take up many a stumbling-block out of your path, as you view the chequered dealings of God with the fallenness of man, sometimes in his righteous sovereignty leaving man to his natural darkness, and sometimes in his tender mercy visiting him with the bright beams of light; but ever, in either case, keeping in view, and calling out into act, his own eternal principle of order. For it will shew you, why he still

preserved the appointed ministry, as he did the appointed ordinances of baptism and the supper, through the many, many long ages of papal apostasy, and brought them out of the harlot's filthy waters at last. God's witnesses are ever sure—and these are they, the ministry, baptism, and the supper. These, with his other two, his Word, and his blessed family, born of his Spirit through his Word, are his witnesses in all generations; and they constitute, in every land and period, the *seals* of his true church, and none is a true church without them. If one be lacking—the ministry, or baptism, or the supper, or the Word, or the children—though the other four be there, one of the Lord's seals is lacking, and it is no true church.

Why have I been led into this subject? For two reasons.

First, because I read what is required of me, as a steward of the mysteries of God. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found FAITHFUL," (1 Cor. iv. 2.) FAITHFULNESS takes in a large range of duties. One is, watchfulness over the household—watchfulness against sin and evil and disobedience of all kinds, in the household—watchfulness, lest the household should forget the principle on which it is formed into a household, and so becoming a household divided against itself, should fall into disorder and, possibly, into desolation. And, while I am taking up that part of faithfulness, and am watching and warning, it behoves me also to take up the steward's uncarefulness of the judgment of the household upon him, and to say, "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by myself—I act by my Lord's authority, and I walk by my Lord's rule—"yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord"—to him must I approve myself, as to him I must account—"therefore judge nothing (ye of the household) before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man (the faithful steward and the faithful servant, receiving together and obeying together the Lord's laws) have praise of God."

I feel this word of faithfulness lying heavily upon me, and therefore do I seek for power from the Holy Spirit to watch and warn, and therefore do I, in humble dependence upon him, exercise the portion I receive. These are no times to gratify a taste for sickly sentimentality, and call it religion. These are no times to saunter up and down the Lord's garden, and cull a few nosegay truths, merely for the sake of

the beauty and the perfume. What with popery on the one hand, which is binding men's souls with the iron chains of spiritual despotism, and rivetting them to the man of sin in hopeless impotence—and with liberalism on the other, which is letting men's souls loose to revel in their natural depravity, and flounder in their natural darkness, and is teaching, that God holds it lawful that every man should do what is right in his own eyes and be his own teacher—the very foundation-stones of the Lord's truths are troubled, and his church is rocking. There is not a wind that blows but bears upon it some heresy or other, by which men are beguiled from the simplicity that is in Jesus, and taught to wander far away from God in Christ. And I feel it needful at times to bring out the sterner and the more hard-featured truths, as you may term them, which form the cement of the house of the living God, and give stability to it, as the pillar and ground of the truth. Oh! I often think that the children of God deal treacherously with him in his truths, and then complain that they cannot find him so near to them, and cannot enjoy his presence so sensibly as they wish. They turn away from many, many of his truths, and say, they want food. Why, these are food! Every truth is food, and, if it is not food to them, the fault is not God's, but theirs. He can give out no truth, that is not both meant and calculated to give strength and solidity to his people. But they are wanting, perhaps, to be always just at the same bite in the pasture, not knowing the sweetness of the grass and the stillness of the waters as they go farther on. So it is with others. The profligate wants not to hear of conversion, the Pharisee of justifying grace, the seeker of election, the babe of assurance, and so each turns away. It is thus the church's hope of glory is dealt with, Christ's glorious manifestation in his coming kingdom. They say the prophecies are dark, and then they refuse to receive light. They say they want a present Christ, as if he would be less a present Christ, because they saw their hope in all its clearness and brightness. And thus that day of days, with all its glorious accompaniments, when Satan's dominion shall be over and Christ's shall begin, when the reign of divisions and insubordination and self-government and contention shall cease, and that of oneness and order and obedience and peace shall succeed, when the sun of God's glory shall rise never to set again, and men's love and holiness shall be as bright as God's glory—that day is to them dark and unseen, having no distinctiveness and bringing no comfort. But this ought not so to be, my dear brethren. The stewards are to distri-

bnte all their Lord's mysteries and truths, in their order. These are to be the food of the household from day to day, and are profitable for strength and comfort, each in its season, and will be ever found so; if not to-day, they will to-morrow.

Secondly.—I would rescue this truth of the ministry from the hands of the popish protestants in our communion. They are hemming the church round by gradual advances, and are preparing to take possession of it by gentle violence, and they must be beaten back. They are perverting this truth into a fearful lie, for they are teaching, that the true ministry has power to convey salvation to the sacraments, and through them to the people. But while I would assert, that God's government of the church is vested in his authorized ministry, and that none other can govern, I would also assert, that salvation is not in the ministry, nor in the sacraments, but in Christ alone—Christ, the high priest—Christ, the sacrifice—Christ, the atonement, with which God was well pleased—Christ, the offering, upon whom God has laid the iniquity of us all—Christ, the sinless one, who gives out perfect righteousness to every one that believeth. And while I claim this, and a thousand-fold more than this, for Christ, our living head and Saviour, and give out the deep mysteries of his redemption in all their multiform application to the poor sinner in his pilgrimage and conflict, I would tell you, that the Holy Ghost alone can teach them and seal them to the heart, and make men meet for glory. Oh! let all here be built up upon *all* God's truths, not one, nor two, nor twenty, but *all* of them, taking the prophets and apostles for their foundation, and CHRIST as their chief corner-stone! Whosoever falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces, and on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. Let all hear that awful truth—he that hath ears to hear, let *him* hear!

And now, my brethren, see how God has hedged round the appointment of the ministry with the most fearful requirements, laid upon his stewards. He has made it, not one of office only, but also of duty; and, while he gives out obedience and submission as the walk of the people, he protects them from tyranny and misrule by the most awful commands to the ministers. And that indeed is the Lord's way in all the headships—he ever takes the part of the weakest. While he says to the subject, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," he says of the magistrate, "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." While he says to the servant, "Servants, obey in all things

your masters according to the flesh," he says to the master, " Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing, that ye also have a Master in heaven." While he says to the wife, " Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord," he says to the husband, " Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." And while he says to the child, " Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord," he says to the parent, " Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

How does he plead with the minister for the people?

They must be *vessels of mercy*. As stewards they must have the mysteries, and they must be vessels containing the treasure. " We have," says one of them, " this treasure in earthen vessels," (2 Cor. iv. 7.) What is the treasure? Hearken: " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That is the treasure—*the light of God in the heart*, the knowledge in the heart of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! The possession of this treasure in himself does God require in every steward of his mysteries. A man may come into the Lord's ordinance of ministry, and have, like Simon Magus, no part nor lot in the matter, and may be still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. But still the Lord requires the treasure to be in him. If he has not the light of God in his heart, how can he distribute it? If he has not himself the knowledge of the glory of God, how can he give it out? If he has not this glory shining in him from the face of Jesus Christ—that greatest of mysteries—how can he dispense it? Oh! awful is that minister's condemnation all his life, and awful, awful, throughout eternity!

And again do I remind you, or rather, I would remind myself, that it is required in a steward to be faithful. Oh! who can tell the weight of that word on the heart of a minister of God? There are times when he is bowed to the earth with the weight of it. When he turns into his conscience, and looks it in the face, and confesses his weaknesses and his corruptions, the sense of his own sinfulness constrains him to feel, that it will take all the labour of his life and all the energies of his spirit to watch over his own soul—and then, when in addition he feels, that the sinfulness and the weaknesses and the corruptions of his people are upon him also, he cries out, Who is sufficient for these things? To tell a world lying in wickedness, that

it will perish in its wickedness—to tell the poor mocker and scorner of his God, that God will judge him—nay, to wound a kind friend with an arrow from the Lord's quiver, and tell him, that he will die, if he turn not—to encounter the trial of *all* forsaking him because he holds up the glass of the Word and shews them their sins; this, this it is to take up the cross and be faithful. And what shall make a man do it? LOVE—nothing but love. He is a *vessel of mercy*—there is the secret of faithfulness;—he loves the souls of sinners because of the love wherewith Christ hath loved him—and so in love, even that self-same love, he follows them and presses on them the tale of God's mercy to sinners—in love to the sinner, and in love to the saint, he unfolds their sins and their wrongnesses, and the Lord's fulness of mercy to them both. But oh! what it costs at times to be faithful! Casting away silver, casting away gold, casting the world away, is nothing to the cost of faithfulness!

Finally, then, be prepared for the text. It is some softening of a minister's trials, when his people will receive it, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves.” Oh! what a happy world would it yet be, fallen as it is, if men would esteem ministers very highly in love for their works' sake, and be at peace among themselves, *for these two things are joined together, and ever go together*—if man's pride and self-will and separation from his brother man and alienation from his God in Christ were subdued, and he were brought into love and obedience and peace! For what is obedience, but love? And what is peace, but love and humbleness and holiness? And what is all this, but obedience? And what else is it, but ORDER? And what is order, but HAPPINESS? Do you ever see this in a people? There is happiness. Do you see it in a church? There is happiness. Do you see it in a family? There is happiness. Do you see it in a man's own heart? Oh! I ask, do you see in a man's own heart, love, peace, humbleness, holiness, obedience, ORDER? There you see happiness—happiness at his fire-side, and happiness in the world—happiness in joy, and happiness in sorrow—happiness when the sun sets upon him at night, and happiness when it rises on him in the morning—happiness here, and happiness in the world yonder—happiness, which will endure as long as God endureth, and that is FOR EVER.

SERMON V.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

JOHN, VI. 53, 54.—“*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*”

MEN AND BRETHREN,—The necessity of the Lord's appointment of stewards to dispense his mysteries to the household is evidenced by this, that the Lord's kingdom is made up of mysteries. God himself is a mystery, and the eternity in which he dwells is a mystery, and the kingdom of his saints is a mystery, and the salvation which fitteth for it is a mystery.

God, *in nature*, is a mystery. He dwells in the sunbeam, which shoots athwart creation, and in the dew-drop, which glistens in the sunbeam—he is the light of the stars in the sky, and of the glow-worm in the hedge—he is the life of the inhabitants of the earth and the waters, and of the bud of the tender herb—he hath gendered the hoary frost of heaven, and divided the way for the lightning of thunders—in him all things in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, live, and move, and have their being; and the invisible things of him, the unseen and wonder-working Being, who maketh the clouds his chariot and walketh upon the wings of the wind, “are clearly seen,” even his eternal power and Godhead;—and yet none, by searching, finds him out, and the world, by wisdom, knows him not. The highest among men, the men of science, of reason, of philosophy, who oftentimes seem to think they make God their debtor for the praises they bestow on him, and the credit they give him, for the wisdom of his material contrivances, (O ! the self-complacency of the human worm !)—these men of mind traverse through the whole range of secondary causes, hang the world on an imaginary balance, and make, not God, but the principle of gravitation, the pivot, on which it turns; and then *see not* God

for the cloud of dust, which they raise about him. Truly, God in nature is a mystery!—Why! *man* is a mystery. Life, that impalpable, immaterial principle, which keeps the flesh from putrefying for three score years and ten—who has ever seen it, or touched it, or weighed it in a balance, or resolved it into its component parts, or known what it is? It comes, and none knoweth whence—it goes, and none knoweth whither. It dwells in a man, and he is a giant for physical and intellectual energies—he traverses sea and land, overcomes all obstacles of nature, and fills the earth with his works—he pierces the darkness of nature's secrets, sends his exploring mind into the worlds of the heavens, and knows the uprising and downsitting of the lights of the sky. It departs from him, and he is a lump of clay, mouldering into dust.—If man, and the life that is in him, be a mystery, what must be the mystery of God and the life that is in him!

God, *in revelation*, is a mystery. “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received into glory.” (1 Tim. iii. 16.) These are revealed mysteries. They are revealed in the Word, which has been given to manifest God; and God has appointed stewards over his households, unto whom they are committed, that they may be dispensed through the households, in order that all men may see what is the fellowship of the mysteries of God, “By revelation,” says St. Paul, “God made known unto me *the mystery*, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the *mystery of Christ*, which, in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit , that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make *all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery*, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that *now* (God having revealed himself in Christ) unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the Church*, the manifold wisdom of God.” (Eph. iii. 3, 9.)—O! my dear Brethren, truly God in *revelation* is a mystery! I would humble you before him—I would cause you to lay your hand upon your mouth, and not speak before him. I would bring you to that babe-like spirit, which, knowing, and (infinitely more than that) feeling the natural enmity of the flesh to God, and its darkness, and depravity, and unteachableness,

looks up to God, and to him alone, as the Revealer and Teacher of *the mystery of Christ*, now revealed and taught in the written word. It is to that babe-like spirit, that “the secret of the Lord” (Ps. xxv. 14) is reserved. It was for the unfolding of the Lord’s secret to that babe-like spirit, to the glory of the Lord’s wisdom and sovereignty, that Jesus thanked the Father, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight.” (Matt. xi. 25, 26.) It is that babe-like spirit, which, being like the spirit of the lowly Jesus, who was born into the world a babe, is of great price in the sight of God, and forms the broad line of separation between him that is saved and him that perishes for ever. Oh! It is true, while the world stands, and will be true, when the world is swept away, that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.” (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

The mysteries committed to the stewards of the Lord’s households are manifold. They are the *inward* things of salvation, such as faith, the new creature, union with Christ, sanctification, holiness, love, that blessed reflection of God on the soul, which bursts upon it, when the sinner sees God loving him for Christ’s sake, and which at once brings God there and all with him. And they are the *outward* things of salvation, such as baptism, which is the pledge and seal of the new creature, and the Lord’s supper, which is the pledge and seal of union. Having recently spoken to you of the former of the outward things, baptism, I would to-day speak to you of the latter, the Lord’s supper.

The text contains the deep spiritual mystery of *oneness with Christ*. And I would endeavour to shew you, 1. What it is to eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood. 2. The present blessedness of such oneness with Christ. 3. The future blessedness of it. And 4. The nature of the Lord’s supper as the pledge and seal of it.

But before I enter upon the mystery itself, I would lay upon your consciences the awful word, “*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*” My Brethren, I would say to you in words as strong as I can find them, and with an affection as strong as the Lord’s Spirit can make it, that this means, that whatever else you may have in the world,—riches, power, pride of life, wisdom, lofty reputation among men, high morality,—if you have not in you whatever eating Christ’s flesh and drinking Christ’s blood may turn

out to be, you have no life in you—you, and yours, your dear children, your beloved parents, the wife of your bosom, the husband of your affections, all whom you love in the world—it is true of one, it is true of all—whosoever eats not Christ's flesh, and drinks not his blood, has no life in him. If you have it not *now*—I do not speak of the past, of what you may have fancied to be in your spirit in former years—I do not speak of the future, of what you may hope to be in your spirit in the years that are coming—but I speak as the word speaks, and say, If you have it not *now*, now, while the present pulse is beating, you have *now* no life in you. You may have abundance of animal life, the life of the brutes of the field, and of the flowers of the garden—and of intellectual life, which revels in itself, and glorifies itself—and of moral life, the life of the poor Pharisee, who places himself on a pedestal and bids God admire him—and of doctrinal life, the life of devils, who believe and tremble. But you have *no spiritual life*, no life before God, no life in Him, no everlasting life, budding and blossoming with heavenly-mindedness, no inward ever-expanding life, which feeds on God as its source, and so never can narrow, and never can lessen, and never can die away. You need nothing to *take* this life from you, no sin, no act of your own, to which God has annexed the penalty of death. The Lord's statement is, that *you have it not*, you are without it, you are in death, in everlasting death; in death, which, comprising the return of the body to its kindred dust, according to the decree common to all the sons of Adam, comprises also the eternity of the spirit in the weeping and wailing of hell-fire. O my dear hearers, I will not weaken the Lord's statement. I will leave it at once on your minds, praying the Lord to fasten it there for ever. Is the Bible true? Then this is true. Is Christ true? Then is this true—that “*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*”

I. What is it to eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood?

God brings spiritual things out of natural, conveys spiritual truth in natural language. Herein does He condescend to man's fallenness. Oh! what a mercy! Where can we look without seeing a mercy? And yet thousands, and tens of thousands travel through life, thread the maze of a long and intricate existence, and never see a mercy! But, then their eyes are blinded; the god of this world, the Devil, hath blinded them, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. But he, whose

eyes are open and who sees light in God's light,—where can he look, in earth or heaven, in the world or in himself, without seeing a mercy? And look where he will, he will see none greater than God condescending to the fallenness of man, and speaking in his language. The language of angels, of spirits, of cherubim and seraphim, he could not have understood. What language they use we know not; but we know that it is not *material*. The thoughts of our own spirit teach us that—they travel through all space, and take in ages in a moment of time, and language toils after them in vain. And yet God comes down to man in this, and herein testifies his love for man and his yearning over him, for most surely is it the affection of a parent calling to his child, and teaching his child in its own language.

What is it, then, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man? It is to believe that Christ gave his flesh for the life of the world. Hearken to what he says in verse 51, “I am the living bread, which came down from Heaven, if any man eat of this flesh he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is *my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world.” Christ is the *living* bread, having life in himself, life ever-living, “in him (the Eternal Word) was life,” (John, i. 4)—he *came down from Heaven*, “no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven” (iii. 13)—he is the *true bread* for the world to feed upon, all other being but shadows—he is the *bread of life*, giving out that which was in him, everlasting life, “he that believeth on me hath everlasting life, I am that bread of life”—this bread is the *flesh of Christ*, “the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.” This flesh did Christ give for the life of the world. To believe in this—to believe that Christ gave his flesh up to death a sacrifice for the world, that the world might not die,—to believe that the sacrifice of Christ is efficacious to give life, and in faith to receive the efficacy of it, and *live*,—this it is to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man. What comes of this? Present possession of Christ, “he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” What comes of this? Present possession of everlasting life, “he that hath the Son hath life.” (1 John, v. 12.) He that possesses Christ possesses the life that is in him, as he that possesses a garden possesses all that is in the garden. What comes of this? Feeding this life with Christ, keeping it in strength and action by possession of him, “as the living Father hath sent me and I live

by the Father, so *he that eateth me, even he shall live by me*; this is that bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead, he that eateth of this bread *shall live for ever.*"

2. Behold the present blessedness of this.

Oh! what can this be but present peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ? "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life." —I love the word *know* in the matter of my soul. I may *think* on matters of politics, on matters of philosophy, on matters of time and sense, on matters bounded by this poor earth, but I would not have my soul balancing on a needle's point, uncertain and unknowing of the turn of the balance. And therefore is it, that the *knowledge* of my peace with God constitutes my peace. "I *know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.) "We have *known* and believed the love that God hath to us, God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and *God in him*. (1 John, iv. 16.) "We *know* that we are of God." (v. 19.) "We *know* that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may *know* him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life." (v. 20.) What is this but peace? What can this be but blessedness? Who among you is so *eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ*? Would you exchange the sense of Christ's love to you for the gold and silver of this world's worshippers? Would you exchange it for the barrenness and emptiness of that scheme of salvation, which gives the soul no food, but makes religion a cold system of doubts and fears, and guards and checks—and knows not that it is God's free and full salvation of a sinner, that it is God assuring the soul of peace and pardon, God going into the soul in a stream of love, God sealing Christ on the soul by his own blessed Spirit dwelling there? Would you give up for the wealth of worlds that one word, *Christ loved me and gave himself for me?* Never; I can answer for you, never. You may be poor and afflicted, wounded and bruised among men,—bitter may be your cup, and cold may be your night, and thorny may be your way,—you may be often humbled and rolled in the dust before God, by a deep experience of the evil that is in your flesh,—you may be brought by a sense of utter weakness to lie on some cold stone in the wilderness, and cry out, 'Lord, I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek thy servant.' But a clear and calm sense of Christ's love to you comes out above it all, like a summer's sky when

the storm has passed away ; again and again the well of living water, which is in you, springs up into everlasting life, felt and realized ; again and again your soul returns unto its rest, crying out, ‘The Lord has dealt bountifully with me ;’ and morning and night you walk about the world, till the sun rises upon your grave, with a sense of peace and acceptance with God.

3. Behold the final blessedness of this.—There is a last day. The day now is, when the believer goes on his chequered way, the sunshine following the cloud and the cloud the sunshine, singing with melody in his heart, “*I know* that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth,” with his eye fixed on that day, stretching over the intervening space, and all of joy or sorrow that fills it up, and looking out for the Morning Star. That last day shall come at last, and Christ shall come with it, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” (John, xiv. 3.) The morning of that day will be the Resurrection morning, that morning of glories, when the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost shall be again concentrated in the Shechinah of old, and the whole worlds of the Eternal God shall shine with it. Oh ! this is the first resurrection, “blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.” For this is the morning when the resurrection trumpet will sound, and the sleepers in Jesus will hear his voice, and have his *distinctive* promise fulfilled to them, which he four times repeated in one conversation, “I will raise him up at the last day.” (John, vi.) This is the morning of that day, when it shall be said by all who knew whom they believed in the days of their flesh, “Lo, this is OUR GOD, we have waited for him and he will save us ; this is THE LORD, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Is. xxv. 9.)

4. The Lord's supper in connexion with this.—My brethren, the Lord's supper is a remembrance and recognition of all this : “ As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” (1 Cor. ii. 26.) The Lord will come. He has come once in the flesh ; all the prophets spake of his so coming, and he came. All the prophets speak of his coming again, and he will come again : “ Now once in the end of the world (Jewish age, dispensation) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.” (Heb. ix. 26, 28.) The world may care not for his coming, the professing church may scarcely look for it, the world and the church may agree together to substitute for it a kind

of shadowy, spiritual Elysium, made out of heathen poesy, for the souls of the blessed—it matters not—the Lord will come, the Lord will be *revealed* from heaven. There is he now, in his Father's house, preparing the many mansions for those who love him and look for his appearing; and thence will he be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. (2 Thess. i. 8, 10.)

The ordinance of the Lord's supper, then, represents to the world the reality of these two things,—the death of the Lord Jesus, and his coming again. It is a simple memorial, and was instituted by our Lord simply as such, of these two things. It is nothing more than this, and nothing less, in its institution although as a means of grace and communion with Christ, like every other means, God will bless it spiritually to the soul, if the soul observe it fitly and spiritually. “This do in remembrance of me,” of my death for your sins, and of my return to receive you into my glory, is the compendium of the idea which our Lord intended to attach to this memorial, as an ordinance to be observed for ever.

We would, therefore, here rescue the text from the Romanist and the Romanizing Protestant. The one says in the letter, and the other virtually, if not in the letter, that the flesh of Christ is eaten literally and positively, because no man can be saved without so eating it; inasmuch as our Lord says, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” (ver. 53.) And from this interpretation arises the *necessity* of the doctrine of transubstantiation, by which the priest miraculously converts the bread in the ordinance into the actual flesh or body of Christ, “sinews, bones and all,” as the Council of Trent has it; otherwise, no man could eat literally the flesh of Christ, and so no man could be saved. Now I meet this interpretation of the 53rd verse by an appeal to consistency of interpretation of the 51st and 57th verses. If it be a correct interpretation of the one to take it literally, it must be the correct interpretation of the other, the subject matter and the language being the same. In the 51st verse, Christ says, “I am the living head, which came down from heaven.” If the Romanist mode of interpreting the 53rd verse be correct, we must then, to be consistent interpreters, believe that Christ was literally living *bread* from heaven.—Again, in the 57th verse, he says, as “I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.”

According to the Romanist's rule of literalness, we must believe that Christ's *living by* the Father was of the same literal and actual kind as the believer's *eating* Christ, which is literally eating his flesh. I defy the Romanist, and his brother, the Romanizing Protestant, to escape from this dilemma. They must receive equally this interpretation of these three passages, or they must abandon it equally; they cannot apply it to one and refuse to apply it to the others. Consistency forbids a disjunctive interpretation.

But the fact is, that this passage, the text, has no reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper was not yet instituted; nor was there, in the whole of the conversation recorded, the least allusion to the crucifixion, except a slight, oblique, and spiritual one in the 51st verse, where our Lord calls himself the bread from heaven, and then changes the figure, and calls the bread his flesh. The whole idea running through the conversation is a *representative* idea, having its origin partly in an event of Jewish history, to which the people had referred at the commencement of it, and partly in a miracle which our Lord had just then wrought. Our Lord had been feeding five thousand persons with five barley loaves and two small fishes; and when the multitude followed him in wonder and admiration, he took occasion, from the *bodily* nourishment to speak of the *spiritual*, and solemnly said to them, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth (like that ye have eaten), but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you." The people in controversy asked him for a sign *from heaven*, that they might believe him, such as had been given of old: "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as it is written, He (Moses) gave them (not earthly bread, however amplified, but) bread *from heaven to eat*." Our Lord instantly took that idea and that event as his text. The manna, or bread from heaven, in the wilderness, he treated as a type and metaphor of himself; and made it, in conjunction with the earthly bread, which he had been just distributing, the *representative* type and metaphor of himself, as the bread, the food, the nutriment of the soul unto everlasting life. The whole of the idea, therefore, is metaphorical, figurative, spiritual, *representative*; and simply intends to convey the blessed tidings, that as bread received into the body and fed upon by the body sustains and nourishes it, so Christ Jesus, received by faith *into the soul*, (for only by faith and spiritually can the soul receive him,) and fed upon in faith by the soul, (for only by faith and spiritually can the soul feed

upon him,) sustains and nourishes it unto everlasting life, “ if any man eat of *this* bread he shall live for ever;” “ whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Thus, my brethren, the Lord's Supper was instituted as a standing memorial to the end of time, of the death of the Lord Jesus to atone for the sins of man, and of his return in glory on the resurrection morning, to judge the quick and dead; and it has been this standing witness to the world of these two facts, the one past and the other to come, for fifteen hundred years. It is also a memorial of the same two things to the church; and brings every believer to a commemoration, as well as to a remembrance of that precious death, by which he lives, and causes him to feed afresh in spirit on Him who loved him and gave himself for him, and sends him afresh on his way rejoicing. The believer thinks afresh of his Lord's coming; looks out afresh for that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour; sets his affections afresh on things above, where Christ now sits at the right hand of God; mortifies his members afresh which are on the earth; and animates afresh his life which is hid with Christ in God.

Come, then, in spiritual and lively faith, and commemorate the Lord's death. Taste, and see that the Lord *is* gracious. Come, and in spirit eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Lord. It is one of the great and blessed mysteries of the kingdom of God, and it is given unto you, who *spiritually* eat and drink, to know it.

THE END.

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